

Task – Writing to argue – Keep our Chaucer!

Resource 12

In Britain, many decisions in how the country is run come about because of committees who meet to discuss ideas. They might make recommendations and suggestions to the Government who then considers whether or not to accept them. This is usually the way that changes in education happen.

An Education Committee has suggested to the Government that Chaucer and his writing should not be studied in schools at KS3 level. This committee has said that Chaucer's works have no value or relevance to today's schoolchildren.

TASK

We are going to write an argument against this proposal. We want to keep Chaucer! We are going to argue that Chaucer's works should continue to be read and studied by KS3 pupils and that they do have a value to today's schoolchildren in this age range.



My stories and poems have been around for over 600 years! Don't stop children from reading my writings now!

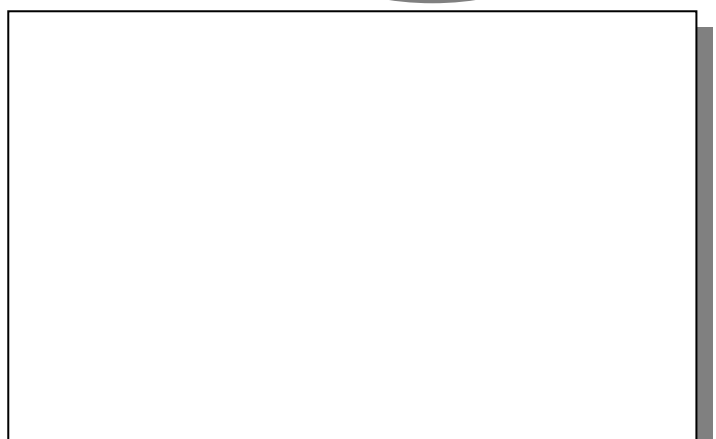
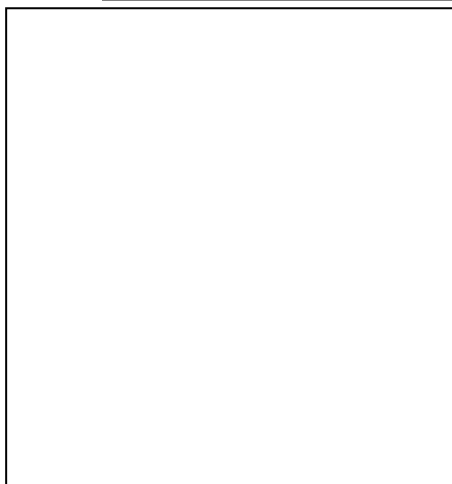
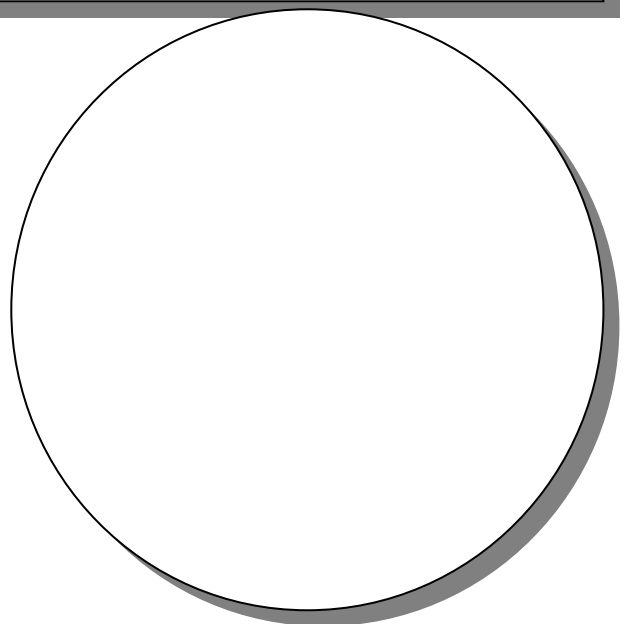
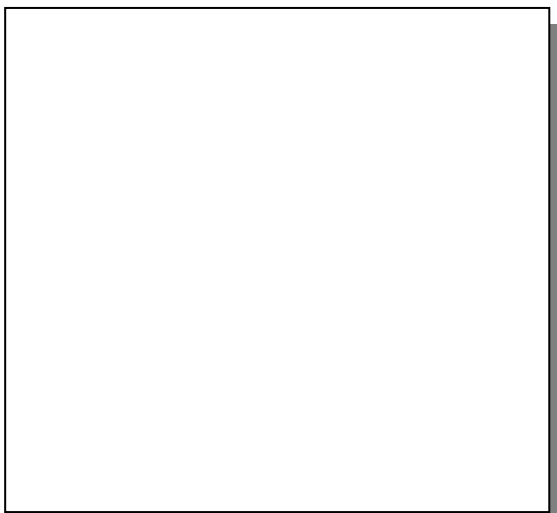
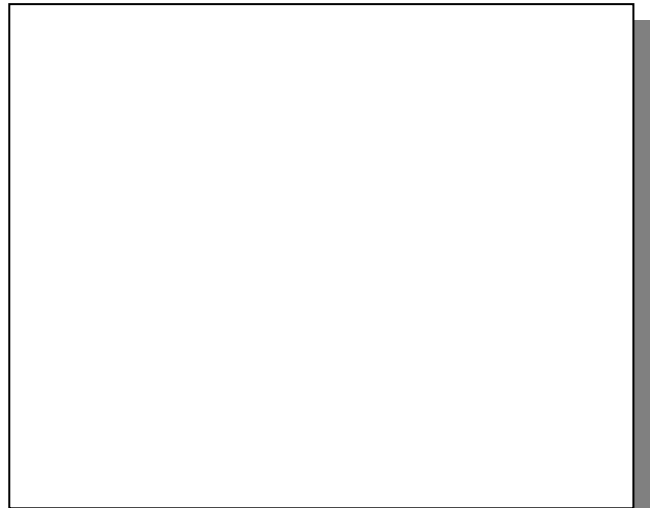
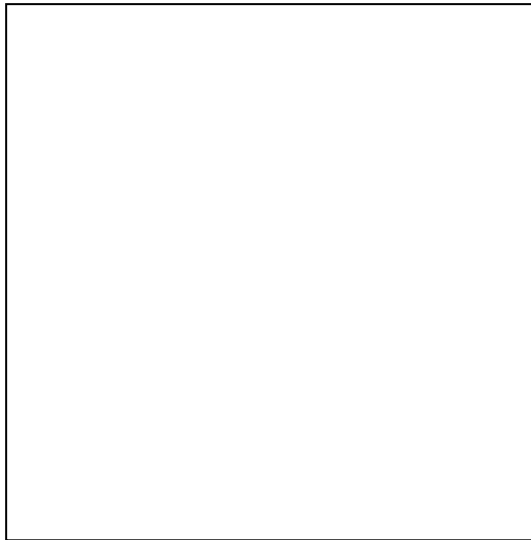
- First, we need to prepare our argument by gathering our ideas.
- To make a strong argument, GOOD REASONS are needed.
- We are going to find AT LEAST SIX GOOD REASONS that KS3 pupils should be allowed to continue to study Chaucer.
- Work with a partner or small group to complete the Protest Posters on the worksheet.
- Each one must give a different reason about the value of Chaucer to British pupils aged 11 to 14.

Writing to argue or persuade

Resource 13

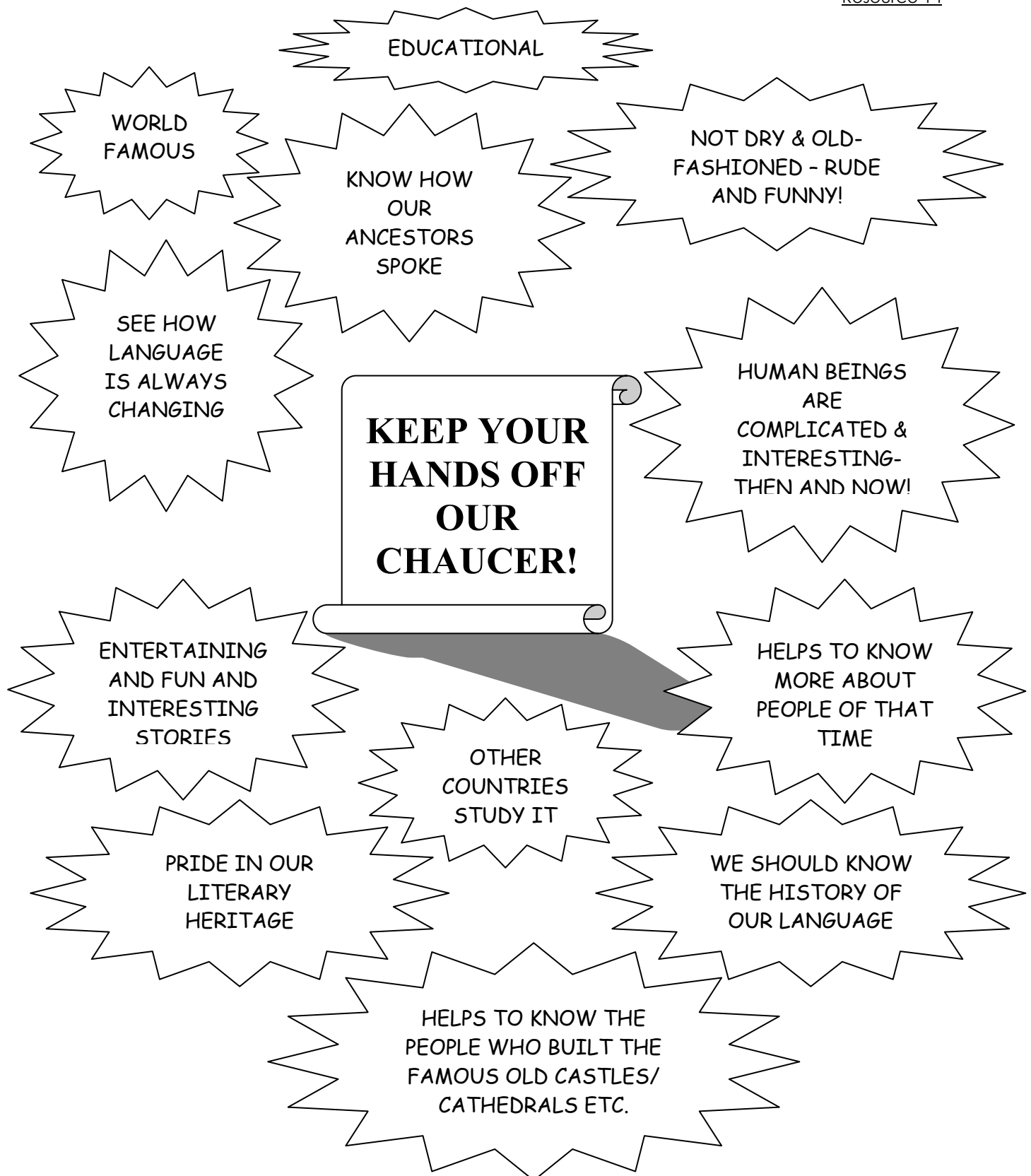
NAME _____ **SUBJECT** _____

Write statements in the Protest Posters to support your view



Some prompts to help with finding six good reasons for KS3 pupils to be allowed to study Chaucer

Resource 14



Writing to argue – Reasons need to be supported – (KS3 pupils should study Chaucer)

Resource 15

We are preparing to write an argument that KS3 pupils should be allowed to read and study Chaucer. We have found some good reasons. Now for the next stage in the preparation:

GOOD REASONS IN AN ARGUMENT NEED GOOD SUPPORT!

Reasons are made much stronger and more convincing by:

EXAMPLES	EVIDENCE	FACTS	STATISTICS
EXPERTS' SUPPORTIVE OPINIONS			PERSONAL ANECDOTES

TASK – FIND SOME SUPPORT

YOU MUST DO A MINIMUM OF THREE OF THE FOLLOWING

Finding answers to just a few of these could be very helpful in your written argument. They might help to **PROVE** how popular/ successful/ educational/ valuable Chaucer is.

- How many (approximately will do) Chaucer books are there for younger readers in your school or local libraries?
- Examples or anecdotes of something you've found valuable or interesting or useful or entertaining from your own recent reading?
- Any examples from any other pupil of something that they have learned or valued because of their recent study of Chaucer?
- Ask some English teachers! See if one of them can give you a good quotation to use!
- Find out the most famous people of Chaucer's day (so that you can claim the study of Chaucer helps pupils to know these people better i.e. how they spoke.)
- Find out some of the country's most famous 13th and 14th century buildings (so that you can claim how it helps to know the flesh and blood people behind the famous stone monuments.)
- Ask some History teachers if you should study Chaucer and why. (If they say "no", it can't be used! You need supportive evidence!)
- In Canterbury, there is a thriving business for school outings for Chaucer e.g. "The Canterbury Tales Exhibition." You could use it as evidence of Chaucer's popularity with younger pupils. Any idea of numbers of visitors per year?
- Try a survey of other pupils- yes or no to reading Chaucer? Abandon this if you're not getting the "yes" answers that you need to support your argument!

Writing a letter – support for Chaucer

Resource 16

One of the websites that you have probably visited for your Chaucer research is:

<http://www.courses.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer>

This website belongs to Harvard University, one of the best universities in the U.S.A. and the world. Professor Alice Simpson is an expert on Chaucer and she runs the Harvard website. She obviously thinks that studying Chaucer is a valuable activity! Of course, she deals with students who are adults but she just might be able to help a little.

TASK

Write a letter to Professor Simpson to see if she can give you any help in your argument for keeping the study of Chaucer.

You might like to follow these suggestions:

- In the first paragraph - tell her who you are and why you are writing, explaining or avoiding British terms like "KS3".
- Be formal and polite in your style.
- In the second paragraph, ask for her views/ ask what happens in the U.S.A regarding Chaucer/ ask if she has any statistics or feedback on the number of 11-14 age visitors to the website.
- Ask for any other useful opinions or information
- She might write back telling you that she agrees about studying Chaucer and giving her reasons. You could use this quotation as an "expert's comment."
- In the third paragraph, express your gratitude for her time and/or help.
- Construct a good letter with the layout, the paragraphs, the spelling and the punctuation all as impressive as you can make them.



Resource 16 (contd)

The form is a template for a letter, enclosed in a large rectangular border. It includes several labeled boxes and a large speech bubble for paragraphs.

- Your address:** A speech bubble pointing to a rectangular box at the top right.
- The date:** A rectangular box below the address box.
- Her name and address, properly laid out, a new line for each new detail.** A rectangular box on the left side.
- Dear Professor Simpson,** A rectangular box below the name and address box.
- Your paragraphs, each one built well and indented at the beginning:** A large speech bubble pointing to three rectangular boxes for paragraphs. Each paragraph box has a small rectangular box at the top left for indentation.
- Yours sincerely,** A rectangular box at the bottom right.
- Your signature:** A rectangular box below the 'Yours sincerely,' box.

Three tips to help with your written argument

Resource 17



◆ TIP ONE RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

Rhetorical questions are questions that are asked for effect. They do not need a reply: the answer is obvious e.g.

1. Are we going to let other countries study one of our greatest writers while we in Britain abandon him?
2. Is this recommendation suggesting that anything old has no value?

◆ TIP TWO AN OCCASIONAL VERY SHORT SENTENCE

Sometimes, but not too often, a very short sentence can be very effective e.g.

1. This plan is appalling.
2. This committee is talking rubbish.

NOTICE – how a rhetorical question can be followed by a very short sentence for a noticeable effect e.g.

3. Is this recommendation suggesting that anything old has no value? The idea is ridiculous.

◆ TIP THREE USEFUL WORDS TO HELP WITH WRITING TO ARGUE

MOREOVER	FURTHERMORE	FOR EXAMPLE	FOR THIS REASON
BECAUSE	IN ADDITION	CONSEQUENTLY	THEREFORE

KS3 pupils should be allowed to study Chaucer – A frame to help you to write this argument

Resource 18

The frame below means that you will produce a piece of writing with six paragraphs in it.

Draft each one, using the ideas that we have gathered together, such as the points, the evidence and the "Three Tips."

Complete and copy the topic sentence for each one.

I want to argue strongly that...

My first reason for arguing this is...

Another very powerful reason is...

Moreover,...

A further convincing reason is...

These points all make it very clear that...